

The Church of Our Lady, Stowmarket



For Saints and Sinners

The 15th Edition: Summer 2018

Foreword

Welcome to the 15th edition of your social magazine.

Until a few weeks ago I only had a few articles on file to edit for your latest social magazine together, but I'm delighted to report that the latest appeal bore abundant fruit. I was even able to save some material for use next time! So, here is **your** latest edition of:



For Saints and Sinners

As usual, our regular contributors provided some interesting articles to share with you and I was very pleased to welcome some new budding authors on board. This edition includes several graphics and short “fillers” provided by contributors, so I only needed to add a couple of fillers to plug the few remaining gaps between offerings.

A big thankyou goes to all our Contributors!

I hope you enjoy reading your 15th Parish Social Magazine. As I've said before, if you find you are inspired to put pen to paper, fingers to key board or eye to digital camera, please do consider making a contribution yourself. All your donations really are gratefully received at **any** time in **any** format. You can always let me know if you prefer to remain anonymous – that is okay, too.

Yvonne Hannan,, Editor, For Saints and Sinners.
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Pilgrimage to Lourdes Easter 2018. Oh, what a week that was!

Hosanna House Children's Pilgrimage Trust (HCPT) have been taking children to Lourdes for a Pilgrimage Holiday for over 60 years. The venture was started by Dr Michael Strode in 1957, he was a paediatrician in a disabled children's hospital in Surrey and he was frustrated at the way such children were isolated from society so with some friends he took a few children in his care to Lourdes for a holiday & a pilgrimage. This was revolutionary in its day in that they stayed at hotels and had days out, just like a family holiday might be. The following year he took some more friends and more children and so HCPT was formed.

This tradition has continued to this day and now some 5,000 people and around 1,000 children travel to Lourdes for at Easter for a fun and spirit filled week. Dr Michael Strode, now Br. Michael Strode is still alive and has recently moved from Caldy Island monastery to a care home in Devon and takes an active interest on the activities of HCPT.



Br Michael Strode.
hcpt.org.uk

I was introduced to HCPT some 20 years ago when my son was invited by Jane Chilvers, the area Group Leader, to join the pilgrimage, he was age 12 and recently diagnosed diabetic, so with some caution, I agreed.

He had a marvellous time and chatted enthusiastically about the week with us on his return. A couple of years later I found he was saving his pocket money to go again, which intrigued me as we did not give him much pocket money and also that he would want to pay to go on a Church event. He duly went and then at the age of 18 he was asked to go again as an adult helper with a child to care for. Jane then asked me to go too, as she needed another adult male. I was suspicious: I did not do pilgrimages, but my son said "Dad, you have got to come and see this, it is very special at Lourdes". What could I say, so I said "OK, just once".

Well, as I find out, Our Lady works in ways that are not marked by the norms of this world, no project management plan is required, just some faith and good intent and now I find myself as the Group Leader. This year, HCPT Group 11 (that's the Stowmarket & Ipswich group) set off very early on Easter Sunday by coach & plane with a group of 15 helpers and 5 children. We have formed up with St Albans School in Ipswich and were blessed with 5 helpers from the 6th form there. The week was fantastic in all respects with everyone engaging in the fun, the hard work and the spiritual side of the week. We arrived in Lourdes on Sunday lunchtime and headed for the Hotel, after lunch we paid a quick visit to the cave (the Grotto) where Mary appeared to young Bernadette 160 years ago.



Statue of Our Lady of Lourdes in the Grotto

Then we headed off to the HCPT Easter Mass, along with a few thousand others. This is a lively Mass and a bit of a surprise to the uninitiated, but a great start to the week.

Each evening after dinner, we calm down with evening prayers and coax the children to bed before the helpers have prayers and reflection. Then free time for all those not on duty overnight. The week follows for us a familiar format with a tour round Lourdes seeing the sights, a visit to the HCPT Hosanna House in a nearby village where they have set up a children's playground and petting zoo and games on the Prairie, the grassy area within the spiritual domain where all can relax in the spring sunshine in sight of the Grotto, all overheard by hymns and prayers. We took a coach up to the village of Gavarnie, high up in the Pyrenees where the winter snow and spring sun made it a great day out. We met up with the other groups from the East Anglia region and held a Regional Mass in a café there, about 120 of us; quite normal for Lourdes it seems; the children enacted out the gospel – The Road to Emmaus, and a good time was had by all. This was followed by a picnic lunch and a walk up the valley with ice creams.

The Trust Mass on Thursday with many thousands of helpers and young people is traditionally held in the vast underground church that is the Basilica of Pope Pius X, a lively Mass with great singing and children focussed – that evening everyone said that this was the highlight of the week. The theme was You Are Special and this year was organised by the American contingent, next year it is the turn of the Welsh to set the scene and organise the music – should be good.

On Friday, (we are all feeling tired by now) we took a trip to the zoo followed by a group Mass on the Prairie with our chaplain Fr John Warrington from St Mary's Ipswich, then

souvenir shopping before packing for the return flight on Saturday. It was inspirational for us older hands to see our 8 younger helpers all engage fully in the week; caring for sick children, consoling, laughing, organising games, praying, having fun and supporting wherever needed. For me the quote of the week was from an 18 year-old helper enjoying a quiet drink in the evening “You said we would be tired, but I did not think I would be this tired!”

For the early risers, up and out at 06.00 to be back in time for rousing children for breakfast, was to walk the “High Stations”: a full-size interpretation of the road to Calvary whilst the sun rises. I encouraged all the young helpers to do this once, they all did and none came back disappointed; it is a wonderful start to the day with prayer and reflection.

A truly great week, my thanks to Annie Bowen-Wright for being our Group Nurse for the last two years, she now hands over to an inspirational newly qualified Nurse, a former student at St Benedict’s, her first time to Lourdes, but not her last. Also, to my wife Gillian, always busy in the background, and my daughter Emily, who plans to lead the group next year. I hope to join again, if she will have me. My thanks also to the Parish of Our Lady’s for your support in prayer, encouragement and finance and especially to Jane for introducing us to Lourdes.

Simon Millyard.

See www.hcpt.org.uk for more details

Prayer to Our Lady of Lourdes

*Oh ever immaculate Virgin,
Mother of Mercy, Health of the Sick,
Refuge of Sinners, Comfortess of the Afflicted,
you know my wants, my troubles, my sufferings.*

*Look upon me with mercy.
When you appeared in the grotto of Lourdes,
you made it a privileged sanctuary
where you dispense your favours,
and where many sufferers have obtained the cure of
their infirmities, both spiritual and corporal.*

*I come, therefore, with unbounded confidence to
implore your maternal intercession.
My loving Mother, obtain my request.
I will try to imitate your virtues
so that I may one day share your company and bless
you in eternity.*

Amen

A short story of childhood Innocence

A mother was teaching her 3-year-old the Lord's prayer. For several evenings at bedtime she repeated it after her mother. One night she said she was ready to solo. The mother listened with pride as she carefully enunciated each word, right up to the end of the prayer. "Lead us not into temptation," she prayed, "but deliver us some e-mail, Amen." (What, can I say?!!)

A Numbers Quiz

The answers (all numbers) are given. Work out the Clues!

	No.	Clue	Your Answer
1	91	S in a SP	
2	77	S S	
3	1066	B of H	
4	2	S to E S	
5	5	G R	
6	90	D in a RA	
7	3,600	S in an H	
8	1	D at a T	
9	4	S in a Y	
10	50	G W A	
11	1953	Y of the C	
12	18	A of M	
13	3	W M	
14	8	L on a S	
15	1989	B W comes down	
16	39	S	
17	24	B in a P	
18	206	B of the B	
19	1812	O	
20	13	S on a P C	
21	64	S on a C B	
22	21	K of the D	
23	238,855	M to the M	
24	7	W of the W	
25	20	C in a T of S	
26	1918	E of W W O	
27	12	F of a R D	
28	9	L of a C	
28	14	L in a S	
30	97	A of the D of E	

Pat Burrows (Parishioner's friend) Answers on Back Page

We pray for those newly Confirmed



*Charles Aquino
Arain Broderick
Samuel Cutting
Elizabeth Jackson
Lucy Mulligan
Alexander Wass*

Six teenagers from Our Lady's Parish in Stowmarket were among twenty-four young people in our Deanery who were Confirmed by Bishop Alan Hopes on Friday 1st June. The Ceremony took place at the Church of St Edmund, King & Martyr, in Bury St Edmunds and followed by refreshments in the Crypt.

The Friday evening 'Celebration of Mass and Confirmation' was described as 'beautiful' with music making it a 'true celebration'. After Renewal of Baptismal Promises by the candidates and congregation, each young person was called forward by name with their Sponsor. Bishop Alan took time to talk with each candidate before anointing them on the forehead with the scented Oil of Chrism and exchanged the Peace with them.

Please remember Charles, Arain, Samuel, Elizabeth, Lucy and Alexander in your prayers as they are called to be 'salt of the earth' and a 'lamp to shine brightly' in the world.

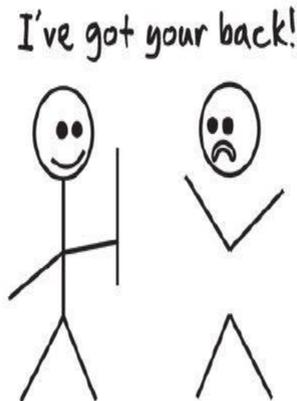
Pamela Wass

Three nice "sayings" to lift folk

1. Based on the Jeremiah Scripture, this quote has seen me through so much: ***"You don't have to be good to serve God, you just have to want to be."***
2. This saying was inspired by Biblical quote from Jeremiah: 29.11: although translations vary: ***God says: "I have plans for you. Plans not to harm you but plans to give you a future, and a hope."***
3. Question: ***"How do you know that God has a plan for you?"***
Answer: ***"Because you're still breathing."***

All taken from UCB's daily devotional The Word For Today, but heard from other sources, too.

Ivona Marcellus- Boot



A Big Decision

Around four years ago I took a big step and moved from the Parish which had been 'home' to me for almost 70 years. Why did I make this decision to move away from the Church in which my Parents had been married, I had been baptised, made my First Holy Communion, was Confirmed, married, and where my Parents' Requiem Masses had also taken place.?

It may seem trivial, but parking had become impossible and the final straw was when two wing mirrors on my car were broken when I parked outside the Church – repair costs were £100 each time. Where was I to continue to practise my Catholic Faith? Fortunately, I was aware of a smaller Parish not much further from my home than my previous Church and where parking was so much easier. It was with considerable fear and apprehension that I turned up for Mass at the 'new' Church. What would the new Parish Priest and congregation be like? My fears were completely unfounded. The greeting I received from the 'Welcomers' was so friendly as was the Parish Priest. There was a lovely atmosphere throughout Mass. The Church is delightful: a lot of effort is put in by many parishioners, from the flower ladies who provide beautiful displays on the altar and other places in the Church, those who arrange many fund raising and social activities – the list is endless. So, you must be wondering where this lovely place is – I am sure you have all guessed by now –

The Church of Our Lady in Stowmarket of course.

Thank you all for making me so welcome.

Margaret Camp

Couldn't we have some different hymns?

Every so often someone asks me, in all innocence, why we can't sing more of the hymns that *they* like. To which the answer is. 'We'd love to. Tell us what hymns you like!' But – to be fair – it's not quite that simple. Every Wednesday evening, at 7.30, we gather round the organ at Our Lady's to choose the hymns for the following Sunday – and yes, you're welcome to come and join us! But we don't just pick out our own favourites and go home. Because it's our job to make sure that the music in Sunday's Mass does its job. And that job is to enhance and support the liturgy on that particular Sunday, and to help people participate more deeply and more fully.

You mean there are rules? Yes. There *are* rules. And some of them might seem rather surprising. For example, when we're thinking about music the hymns are almost an optional extra. They're nothing like as important as many of the other music settings in the Mass. And on the whole, Gregorian chant is preferred to modern settings, although (you'll be glad to hear) those are allowed as well. If you'd like to know more about this, then take a look at the General Instruction to the Roman Missal – GIRM for short. (It's in the front of the big lectionary on the altar, but if you search for GIRM online you can download the whole document. It'll take you a while to read it, though...!)

So, what should we be singing? According to GIRM, when using music in the Mass the most important settings are:

- The Gospel Acclamation: the short piece sung just after the second Reading, while the Priest goes to the lectern. (A cantor can lead this one – our choir usually do.)
- The Sanctus: (Holy, holy)
- The Memorial Acclamation: (one of the three available) The Great Amen.

Next in importance are:

- The Opening Procession (though GIRM would prefer a setting of the Entrance Antiphon for the day to our usual hymn)
- The Gloria (ideally sung by all)
- The Psalm (led by a cantor or choir – so again not a hymn, but the psalm for that day as shown in your missal).
- Communion Processional song (again, GIRM would prefer a setting of the Communion Antiphon for the day)

So far no hymns at all, then! After that come:

- The Penitential Rite: Kyrie eleison/Lord have mercy
- Preparation of Gifts: could be a hymn (so that's the first...!)
- Breaking of Bread: Agnus Dei/Lamb of God
- Exit Procession: could be a hymn, though some argue that nothing at all should be sung at this point (bet that surprised you!)

'Fourth-rank' music includes:

- The Greeting: 'The Lord be with you' at the start of Mass
- The Bidding Prayers (we did try singing these once, but it wasn't popular...)
- The Preface Dialogue and Responses, and the Preface itself

Which leaves what we might call the 'optional extras':

- The Opening Prayer (sung by the priest)
- The Credo/I believe
- The Prayer over the Gifts (sung by the Priest)
- The Lord's Prayer/Our Father
- Prayer after Communion (sung by the Priest)
- The Dismissal

**In practice we don't often use any of these.
So, what do we do at Our Lady's – and why?**

For a typical Sunday Mass we will usually start by learning the Psalm for the day, and the Gospel Acclamation. Then we'll choose a mass setting which ideally includes the Gloria, Sanctus, Memorial Acclamation, Great Amen and Agnus Dei. Typically we'll use the same setting for a few weeks, so that people who don't know it have a chance to learn it. After that, we'll start thinking about hymns for the Opening Procession, the Preparation of Gifts, Communion and the Exit Procession. But again, we don't just choose 'the ones we like'... Before we even start to choose a hymn, we'll look at all the Readings for the day – the Old Testament Reading, the second Reading (usually one of the Epistles) and, of course, the Gospel itself. What are these Readings about? What are the key phrases or ideas that they convey? Can we find hymns that reflect those phrases and ideas? And if we can, will people know them and be able to sing them? Sometimes those questions aren't easy to answer...

For the **Entrance Hymn**, we can choose something that's relevant to the main themes of the day. If that's not possible we'll usually pick a 'gathering hymn' – something about the church coming together for worship.

For the **Preparation of Gifts**, we'll often look for something that reflects, directly, the main theme in the Gospel Reading. Again, if that's not possible, there are a number of hymns about the offering of the gifts which can be used here.

For the **Communion** hymn we'll usually look for something that's musically not too intrusive – people are waiting to receive communion, after all, and our job is to create a prayerful atmosphere. I'd love to say that we aim to match the Communion Antiphon, but we can very rarely manage it. Fortunately, again, there are a number of hymns suitable for this point in the Mass, or we can sometimes find a hymn that ties in with the Readings

and also fits well here. Sometimes we'll follow that with a very simple chant (from Taize, for example) – something meditative but very easy and repetitive, which anyone can sing even if they're not holding a hymn book. It also means we can keep singing as we go to Communion ourselves.

Finally, for the **Exit Procession**, we will (usually) try to choose something that is rousing and strong – but which also, if at all possible, fits the theme of the day. Sometimes we need to think about something other than the Readings here (for example on Sea Sunday or on the World Day of Peace).

But I don't like a lot of the hymns you choose! I'll let you into a secret – we don't like some of the hymns we choose. But we have to consider what *other people* like, as well. It isn't fair to choose only those hymns which suit our own particular tastes and ideas, especially when the ages in our congregation range between 2 months and 92 years! Older parishioners would sometimes like to hear the hymns they grew up with – even though there weren't all that many of them, and most date from the Victorian era. Parishioners in their 40s, 50s and 60s hanker for the very first hymns that followed Vatican II – though some have lasted better than others. And us? We try to keep an eye on newer music by composers like Bernadette Farrell – especially because a lot of it is based on scripture, which can make it the perfect choice to fit the theme for a particular Sunday. Then, of course, we need to think about the time of year. In Lent, for example, musicians have to rein themselves in – a lot. No showy descants. No music before or after Mass. Restrained, simple (and probably rather downbeat) hymns – it's a penitential season, after all. (*Though we are allowed to let rip a little on Gaudete Sunday...*)

And the hymns we can choose from? Well, in practice they really need to be in our *Laudate* hymn book, or simple enough

that people can pick up the tune if we give them the words. Laudate itself offers plenty of choice, with over 1000 settings to choose from, but of course that doesn't include every possible hymn and (these days) it won't include some of the newest settings, either. Even so we find it's a very valuable resource and we're delighted to have it available.

Where do you learn this stuff? We'll let you into a secret – we have help. (Luckily...!) There are two excellent guides published by Stephen Dean (recently retired as musical director for the East Anglia diocese) and the Society of St Gregory (SSG for short, dedicated to promoting music in liturgy in the UK and worldwide). Each looks at the Readings and suggests possible hymns that will chime in with the themes of the day, and even (sometimes) where we can use them in the Mass. It does make our job a lot easier – though of course we'll also think about other choices that might also be suitable. Then there's the SSG Summer School, an annual event which I described in an earlier issue of this magazine. My wife Rosemary and I have been regular attenders for many years, missing it only when we absolutely have to. There we meet other parish musicians, as well as the composers and the writers who are creating new music all the time – and the liturgy experts who help us understand how best to use it.

So what can I do to help the music? First and foremost, don't be afraid to sing, if you possibly can – our job is to choose music that allows you to join in, and participate as fully as possible in the liturgy. If you can't sing, or you really don't want to, please look at the words. There's a good reason why each and every hymn has been chosen, and by following the words you may well gain fresh insight into the Readings for that day – or at least understand why those hymns were chosen. And if you'd like a crack at singing in the choir, just talk to us after Mass. (I promise we won't bite.) Anyone is welcome to join us at our Wednesday evening practices, even if they can't sing but would like to take

part in working on the liturgy. And if you *can* sing, and would like to be part of a choir, you're doubly welcome. (And no, you don't have to be able to read music.) And don't, for heaven's sake, worry about being 'good enough'. I didn't think I was good enough when I first started singing at Our Lady's rather a long time ago. Anything I've learned since is what I've discovered 'on the job'. And anyone else can do the same.

Allan Scott (a cantor at Our Lady's since 1991)

Singing to God



For you, O Lord, have made me glad by your work; at the works of your hands I sing for joy. Psalm 92:4

Next to the word of God, music deserves the highest praise. The gift of language combined with the gift of song was given to man that he should proclaim the Word of God through music. Martin Luther

Corned Beef Loaf

Ingredients

12 oz can corned beef
6oz grated cheddar cheese
9 large slices thin sliced white bread
2 level tablespoons French mustard
6 oz butter
2 oz freshly made breadcrumbs
1 large egg
1 peeled and finely chopped medium onion
2 level teaspoons pickle

Method

1. Turn oven on to preheat to 190°C
2. Cut crusts off bread and flatten each slice slightly with a rolling pin
3. Melt butter and brush it generously on both sides of bread
4. Line a 2lb loaf tin with the bread, keeping 2 slices for the top
5. Spread the inside of the bread lining with mustard
6. Cut corned beef into cubes and put in a bowl
7. Stir in 2/3 of the grated cheese, breadcrumbs, egg onion and pickle until combined
8. Turn corned beef mixture into the bread-line tin and spread surface level
9. Cut each of the remaining 2 slices of bread into 4 triangles and arrange them overlapping down the centre of the loaf
10. Scatter remaining cheese over the top
11. Bake on centre shelf of oven at 190°C for about 25 mins, or until golden brown and the cheese has melted.

This freezes well and is ideal for picnics and packed lunches

Pat Smith

Queen Katharine's Tears

The Victorian stained-glass window in St Mary's church, Bury St Edmunds, like an embroidery hoop, fixes a royal nativity scene opposite the grave of Mary Tudor. Thomas More and Erasmus, like two wise men, visit the nursery of Henry VII at Eltham, which depicts: Henry who succeeded to the throne, together with his sisters Margaret, eventual queen with James IV of Scotland and Mary, initially queen of France but mainly Duchess of Suffolk, with her eventual husband, Charles Brandon. Charles grew up in the royal household after his father and, as standard bearer for Henry VII, fell at Bosworth defeating Richard III. Arthur, the would-be successor, was absent, already in Ludlow as Prince of Wales. For Erasmus this was more than a courtesy call since he was pulling threads together for a school for princes; in England he had to be content with influence through his writings. He held the Margaret Beaufort Chair of Theology for a short time, but the King's mother was really interested only in what would support the royal institutions for her son and, of course, her grandson. Little did she know!



Portrait: [Lucas Hornebolte](#)

The criticism Erasmus made of Church corruption and its doubtful practices helped initiate the Reformation, although he remained until death a loyal son of the Church. His rather disjointed work *The Praise of Folly* (a thinly disguised praise of his friend More) threads Bible elements with pagan references in such a way that it sometimes seems that Folly is praising herself.

More's 1516 work *Utopia* is similarly hard to pin down. The main character is really Bishop Thomas Moreton, chancellor under both Richard III and Henry VII, making it clear that the Church is independent of the ruling dynasty. The Latin work, published in Amsterdam, therefore far from England, describing a fictitious island about 15 miles from the mainland, starts with the phrase "with Henry VIII gloriously reigning" showing the King at an eventual reading that there was nothing to worry him here. Little did he know! More was commending his own humble approach to society and state, just like Folly in Erasmus's work colourfully praised gospel wisdom.

Thomas More was later Chancellor himself at the time King Henry VIII sought his divorce/annulment. Unable to fulfil the King's requests he resigned in 1532. The King could not resolve the problem in a civil way, so he commissioned the new Archbishop of Canterbury, Thomas Cranmer, who happened to have been chaplain to the Boleyns, to make an ecclesiastical decision. As the Council of Dunstable met in May 1533, Katharine was at Ampthill, between Luton and Bedford. In the place where the castle once stood are two tall crosses, one for Katharine with a brilliant anti-Catholic poetic inscription by Horace Walpole at the base.

*In days of old here Ampthill's towers were seen,
The mournful refuge of an injured Queen.
Here flow'd her pure, her unavailing tears;
Here blinded zeal sustained her sinking years....*

When Katharine of Aragon resided in Ampthill, the town's lace-makers were being thrown out of rented accommodation as their businesses went bust through lack of work. She contrived to destroy her own collection and commissioned replacements. Business improved; the story goes that they later moved to Nottingham to invigorate the lace industry there. When Katharine

was moved to Buckden after the Dunstable decision it is said that the people lined the route for all 24 miles. I imagine the local magistrate asking one, “*Don’t you know the King would be angry?*” and receiving the answer, “*Why do you think I’m here?*” At Buckden Katharine taught the local people embroidery. An example of her black work is on display in the gatehouse. One can almost see the tears. As first-time Dowager Princess of Wales Katharine knew much about making ends meet. She spent the years between Arthur’s death and marriage to Henry at Barnard’s Castle, London, in penury. The second time, after the annulment, she continued the sewing and mending. When Shakespeare wants to mark her contribution in his play on Henry VIII he has her say: “*God mend all*”. She would understand better than most the meaning of the words “*broken-hearted*”, “*grief-stricken*” and “*forsaken*”.

James Conlon

Tears

*There is a sacredness in tears.
They are not the mark of weakness, but of power.
They speak more eloquently than
ten thousand tongues.
They are the messengers
of overwhelming grief,
of deep contrition
and
of unspeakable love.*

www.wisesayings.com/tears-qoutes/

The Other World

Emma and Tom walked into the other world. All they saw **BLUE**, blue trees, blue flowers, blue grass, blue everything. "This is very blue." said Tom. Emma laughed. "Hello!" shouted Emma. Then out of the blue shadows out of a blue cave came a blue monster it one light blue eye and two dark blue fangs. Tom and Emma shrieked.

Then when they finally stopped screaming they realised that the monster was very friendly. The blue friendly not-so-like monster smiled and said "Hello my name is Alex you can call me Al though. What are your names?" "My name is Tom, and this is my sister Emma." replied Tom. "Hello Tom and Emma would you like to come in?". "Yes please." said Tom.

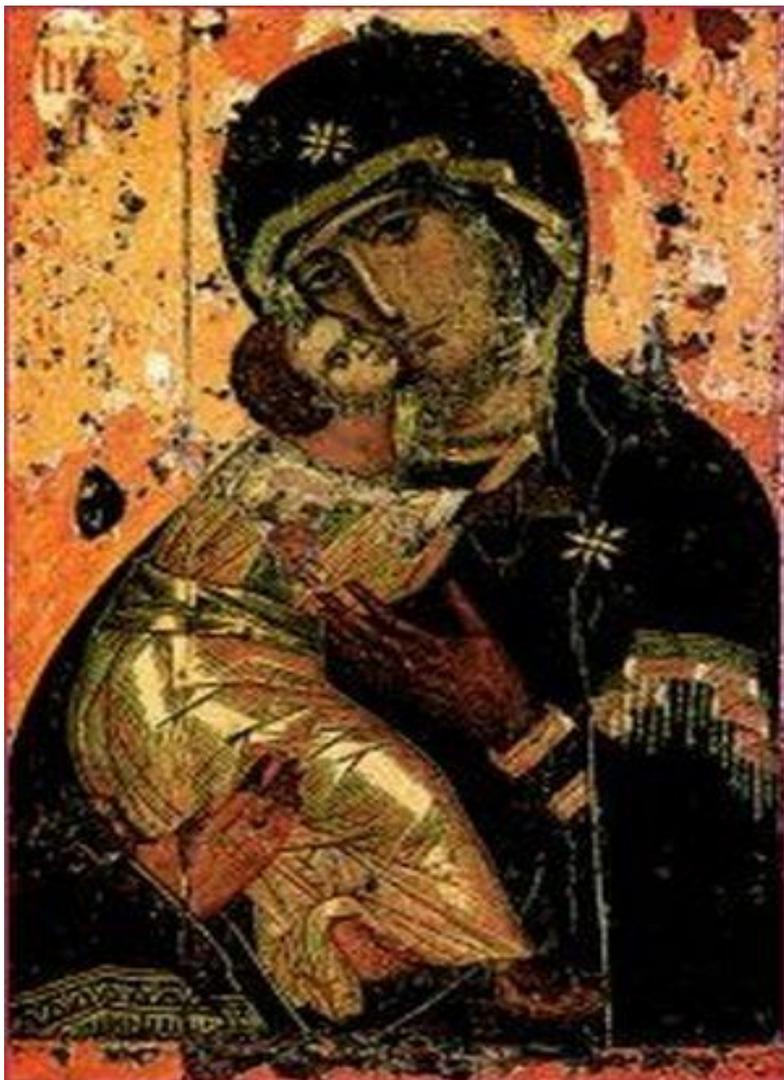
When they got in they weren't surprised to see blue everything, but they were surprised to see ... blue food!! Then Alex introduced his family his wife looked the same as Alex, but with longer hair and they also had a tiny baby ... he looked the same as Alex but smaller.

After that Alex said "Where do you come from?" "Earth, which is very different to this." "Would you like to go back?" asked Alex. "Yes please, if you could help us." said Tom and Emma. "Sure." said Alex. Then he took them to his blue teleport. Tom and Emma jumped into the blue teleport and in a second, they were back home.

Adam Hannan, age 9 (editor's grandson)

Taken from his *creative writing* project. Sent with love all the way from Australia, for inclusion in our Magazine

A meditation on the Icon of the Virgin of Tenderness of Vladimir (Constantinople 11th - 12th Century)



The icon of the Virgin of Tenderness of Vladimir, treasured by the Russian people as miraculous from the 14th and 15th centuries, is the icon I have most loved and pondered. It has an extraordinary power to bring one into contemplation of the mystery of the Incarnation of our Lord, the compassionate love and mercy of God towards Adam and Eve.

At the heart of the icon is the striking tenderness displayed by the infant Jesus cheek to cheek with Mother Mary, the New Eve, representing and manifesting the power and love of God for *the Woman* and *her offspring*, namely all the disciples of her Son Jesus Christ, that is the universal Church. Mary supports Jesus tenderly on her right arm, whilst her left hand points to her Son and offers Him to each one who gazes upon the icon. Icons are said in Orthodox Christianity to be “windows into heaven”, however what we see in this icon is the *coming down* of the one who is from heaven, to be manifest to the world as revelation of the holiness of God, the Father that is to be “the visible manifestation of the invisible God”.

Although Mary is offering her son to us and is holding him tenderly, she does not look directly at the Son, but rather her gentleness is directed towards us the viewer, her gaze is more mysterious and penetrating than that of the famous Mona, Lisa, and draws us into contemplation of her role in salvation history and her own response to the gift of God offered to us. What is most powerful of all is the manner in which Christ child gazes so tenderly at the Woman through whom God is delivered into the world. Her *fiat*, her saying yes to the angel of the Lord, has enabled this immense gift of mercy and redemption. When we see **how their cheeks touch**, something more powerful than the hand of God reaching out to Adam in the Sistine chapel ceiling is portrayed. The latter portrays God creating Adam out of love,

whereas here God is embracing the humanity of our Mother with grace and mercy, restoring what was lost in the disobedience of the first Eve.

In contemplating this icon, we actually *experience* the mystery of divine grace as we see before us the arms of the child embracing His Mother with immense loving-kindness. His hands are around her as if protecting the Woman from all harm and in that embrace he is embracing also our own humanity in the new Eve (*the Mother of all who live*). What is revealed is the means offered to us all to enter into the deep mystery of God's redeeming love and tender mercy to sinners. God so loves this *new humanity*, recreated in the Son as holy, that this gift is given to all humankind through the fiat of our Lady and incarnation of the "Word of the Father now in flesh appearing".

Here is a rich treasure! May all who have eyes to see the *know* the joy of the Gospel, manifest and given to us in this ancient icon, the Virgin of Tenderness of Vladimir.

Geoffrey Johannes

A short quotation to ponder

*Work as if you were to live a hundred years.
Pray as if you were to die tomorrow.*

Benjamin Franklin

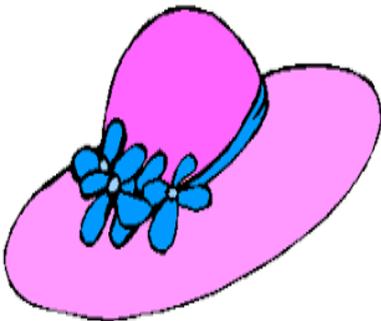
Read more at:

https://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/benjamin_franklin_165454

The Hat

The day of the funeral had arrived, I drove up to grandma's house with a heavy heart, mum had decided that it was from there that the funeral procession would take place. I saw uncles, old friends and neighbours of grandma's together with my dad all standing outside, all in their sober suits puffing away at their cigarettes. I gave them a cherry wave and big smile and went inside to see mum, also in a sober suit and the obligatory black hat. She turned to greet me but I knew at once that I had not dressed as she had expected, rigged out in my brightest floral dress and my hair still dyed purple, much to mum's disapproval.

Grandma was just the opposite, flamboyant, gay and sparkling but most of all full of fun. The house was still as I remembered, old well used furniture, sofas that you just sank into and gaily coloured pictures. The kitchen as always was strewn with magazines, cut out recipe cards, packets of seeds that she not had the time to plant. All my school holidays had been spent with grandma, it was her who had taught me about colours, about nature and about her beloved garden. I had spent hours with her planting wild flowers, exotic shrubs and bedding plants with strange sounding names, sometimes all in a 'mish-mas'.



From my earliest memories grandma's head had always been adorned with her 'gardening' hat, a big floppy straw creation that covered her face. Each year she covered it with bright colourful ribbons and pretty silk flowers.

I asked, begged and beseeched grandma to let me wear her hat but each time she just smiled and said it was too big and I would have to wait until I was older. The cortege and funeral party were almost ready to leave, I watched them get into the cars and move slowly away, mum turned to me and told me to hurry, but I wanted one last look around grandma's house that held so many memories for me. I opened the door to her inner sanctum where I knew I would once again see all the packets of, spade and trowel and rows of brightly coloured pots.

I jumped into my car and speed to the church in time to follow the procession down the aisle, I noted the sudden gasps, the looks of surprise, the quick turn of the head and my mother's speechless face as turned to look. But me I walked on, head held high and whispered quietly as I looked towards the High Altar

"Hi Grandma, at last I am wearing your hat!"

Pat Smith

Just a thought

It's better to shut up and give the impression that you're stupid than to say something and erase all doubt.....

<http://coolfunnyquotes.com>

10 Pearls of Wisdom

1. If you're too open minded, your brains will undoubtedly fall out
2. With great power comes an even greater electricity bill
3. Artificial intelligence is no match for natural stupidity
4. My idea of housework is to sweep the room with one glance
5. For every action, there is an equal and opposite government programme
6. If you look like your passport picture, you probably need the holiday
7. Opportunities always look bigger when they're on their way out rather than when they are incoming
8. Middle age is when broadness of mind and narrowness of the waist change places
9. Junk is what you keep for years and discard three weeks before you need it
10. Experience is a wonderful thing: it enables you to quickly recognise a mistake when you make it again

Numbers Quiz – The Answers

1	91	Squares in a Sudoku Puzzle
2	77	Sunset Strip
3	1066	Battle of Hastings
4	2	Sides to Every Story
5	5	Gold Rings
6	90	Degrees in a Right Angle
7	3,600	Seconds in an Hour
8	1	Day at a Time
9	4	Seasons in a Year
10	50	Golden Wedding Anniversary
11	1953	Year of the Coronation
12	18	Age of Majority
13	3	Wise Monkeys
14	8	Legs on a Spider
15	1989	Berlin Wall comes down
16	39	Steps
17	24	Blackbirds in a Pie
18	206	Bones of the Body
19	1812	Overture by Tchaikovsky
20	12	Sides on Pound Coin
21	64	Squares on a Chess Board
22	21	Key of the Door
23	238,855	Miles to the Moon (approximately!)
24	7	Wonders of the World
25	20	Calories in a Teaspoon of Sugar
26	1918	End of World War One
27	13	Bakers' Dozen
28	9	Lives of a Cat
28	14	Lines in a Sonnet
30	97	Age of the Duke of Edinburgh

